

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Reply, new claims 27-37 will be presented for examination. Claims 1-26 have been canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

A certified translation of the German application from which the present application claims priority is being obtained. German patent publication DE 198 47 985 C1 to Poschmann et al. was published after the priority date of the present application and is therefore not prior art against it. The rejections based solely or partially on the Poschmann et al. document should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 based on U.S. Patent US 6,231,831 B1 to Autenrieth et al. and U.S. Patent 5,776,346 to Fukai is requested. While it is submitted that these rejections are not proper, the cancellation of claims 1-26 technically renders the rejections moot. Neither Autenrieth et al. nor Fukai anticipates any of new claims 27-37.

Autenrieth et al. disclose a membrane for separating hydrogen from a gas mixture provided on at least one side with a catalyst layer. Fukai discloses soft water generators containing an ion exchange resin, an ion generator containing a mixture of tourmaline and aluminum oxide, and a rock container. Neither reference discloses a tank for receiving a carbon- and hydrogen-containing fluid for supplying a fuel cell system with an operating medium, comprising a straining means for cleaning the fluid, the straining means including a particulate filter, a filter for hydrogen halides and inorganic halogen compounds, and a filter for sulphur

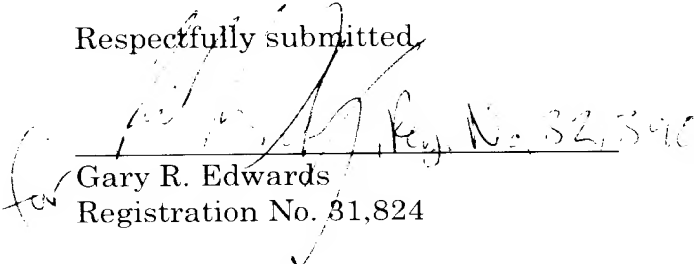
pending claims 27-37.

Claims 13 and 19 have been cancelled, rendering the Examiner's rejections of these claims moot. Cancellation of claim 13 also eliminates the Examiner's objection to the drawing.

Reconsideration of this application is again requested. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,



Gary R. Edwards
Registration No. 31,824

CROWELL & MORING, LLP
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
GRE:RRD:msy